of Ministers to recommend an Integrated Food Law, independent regulators and comprehensive amendments to the existing legislations for facilitating fast pace growth of food processing industries. A number of plan schemes and interventions for infrastructure development including cold storage, refer vans, agri-export zones and food parks have been devised to facilitate food processing industries.

Rationalisation of tax structure is a continuous process and Government has brought down excise duty on processed fruits and vegetables to zero w.e.f. the Budget year 2000-2001.

Rationalising Taxes on FPIs

1120. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seeking to rationalise taxes, affecting the food processing industries;

(b) whether the Centre has requested the State Governments to consider granting zero sales tax status to such industries, especially in the case of perishable products;

(c) whether the Group of Ministers had been constituted to deliberate on integration of food laws and recommend a draft statute;

(d) whether the National Council for Applied Economic Research has estimated that investment in the food processing sector is likely to go up during the Tenth Five Year Plan; and

(e) if so, to what extent it is more compared to Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. A Group of Ministers (GOM) has been constituted to recommend a Modern Integrated Food Law and amendment to related Laws like Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and orders under the Essential Commodities Act;

(d) and (e) In a study got conducted recently by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries through National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), an investment of Rs. 92.208 crores for processed food sector has been projected during Tenth Plan period in case GDP grows @ 8% per annum. During 9th Five Year Plan, investment in the Food Processing Sector was estimated as

Rs. 38,531 crores.

Exemption/withdrawal of taxes on FPIS

1121. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the representatives of Food Processing Industries and various industries' associations have demanded exemption or withdrawal of taxes applicable to processed foods and removal of contract farming for food processing industry, from the purview of the land ceiling law, to achieve quality and economy of scale;

(b) if so, whether this issue was discussed at a meeting of State Ministers for Food Processing Industries;

(c) if so, what were the points discussed in the meeting; and

(d) to what extent Government have agreed to provide help and assistance to the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) to (d) Representations regarding exemption/withdrawal of taxes applicable to food processing industries have been received from different associations. One of the constraints faced by Food Processing Industries is multiplicity of tax. The Industry Associations during interaction, including in meetings with State Ministers, have demanded fiscal concessions to processed foods for accelerated growth of this sector. Rationalisation of tax structure is a continuous process and Government have taken various steps in this regard. In the Budget of 2001-2002, Excise Duty on processed fruits & vegetables was brought down to zero from 16%.

Community Fruit Processing and Training Centres in H.P.

1122. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a proposal for setting up of community fruit processing and training centres in rural areas in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the places covered under this scheme; and